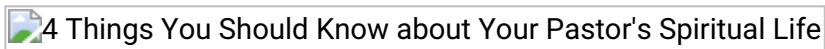


4 Things You Should Know about Your Pastor's Spiritual Life

Eric McKiddie



I hope you don't think pastors are superhuman. When you mostly see us on best behavior one morning a week, it is easy to get an unbalanced view of us. I want to let you in on a little secret. Pastors are normal people.

So no one should be surprised when a pastor messes up – whether it is a famous pastor, or *your* pastor. We are in the same fight you're in. We are not aloof from your spiritual battles. We enter the fray every day – even Sunday – just like you.

It is important that churchgoers understand pastors are not a special class. How normal is the pastor's spiritual life? Here are four ways.

1. Pastors face the same temptations as everyone else

Paul wrote, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-corinthians/10-13.html>)), and this includes everyone in vocational ministry. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to pastors.

The same is true of Jesus, as well. Hebrews 4:15 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/4-15.html>) says that Jesus "in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." If Jesus was tempted in every way, then pastors are certainly tempted in every way, too.

2. Pastors have the same spiritual requirements as everyone else

There are two places in the New Testament that list qualifications for elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-timothy/3.html>) and Titus 1 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/titus/1.html>)). It would be easy to think that these there are extra rules for leaders, since they give guidance to the rest of the church. Are pastors are inherently holier than everyone else since they have their own special lists of requirements?

No, actually. As a matter of fact, everything in those lists is required of all Christians (<http://www.christianity.com/>) somewhere else in the NT. Even that supposedly unique qualification for elders of being able to teach is required of all other believers (Col. 3:16 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/colossians/3-16.html>)) and especially parents (Eph. 6:4 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/ephesians/6-4.html>)).

Why the special lists then? Pastors and church leaders need to be an example to the rest of the church in how to glorify God in these areas of life. Not because they are better than everyone else in the church, but because they are *not*.

3. Pastors know more about the Bible (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/>) than they can apply

You should know that our scriptural knowledge probably outpaces our spiritual maturity. You can't equate biblical knowledge with spiritual growth, even though the latter depends on the former. On our best days, we try to live out everything that we have learned in our devotions, sermon prep, and seminary education. But even our best days, we don't.

This is why I love being around older, more spiritually mature believers. I may be able to wax more eloquently theologically, but they flat out love God and people more. Their godly example disciples a young pastor like me, and they may not even know it.

4. Just like you, pastors can't grow outside of community

Pastors, ironically, can be some of the least pastored people in the church. We usually don't need more pastoring than others, but we never need less. Just as much as anyone else, we depend on those in our church to use their spiritual gifts to build us up.

Yet pastoral ministry is a weird mix of loneliness while always being around people. I believe this is one of the biggest obstacles pastors face in their spiritual growth. Providing a safe, confidential place for your pastor to receive life-on-life ministry from your church, like in a small group, is an incredible gift.

What about New Testament commands to honor pastors?

There are places in the Bible where the church is called to honor, submit to, and obey its leaders (Heb. 13:17 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/13-17.html>); 1 Pet. 5:5 (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/5-5.html>)). Does that mean that pastors are necessarily more spiritual than everyone else, or better in God's eyes?

No, not at all. It is simply a matter of the position such people have been called to. The healthiest churches are those where the pastors lead knowing that they no better than those they lead, and the church follows, trusting that God called them to that position, not because they earned it, but by his grace.

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